

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 06719 310514Z
ACTION SIL-01

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2844
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6719

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, PO
SUBJ: LABOR MINISTER EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER AFL-CIO
PROGRAM

REF: (A) LISBON A-231, (B) LISBON 6161

SUMMARY: LABOR MINISTER TOLD AMBASSADOR HE HOPED THAT
AFL-CIO PROGRAM BEING DISCUSSED COULD BE HANDLED IN MANNER
WHICH WOULD NOT ENDANGER PROGRESS ALREADY MADE IN LABOR
SECTOR. END SUMMARY.

1. LABOR MINISTER MALDONADO GONELHA AND SOCIALIST PARTY
(PS) INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY RUI MATEUS TOOK
INITIATIVE IN INVITING AMBASSADOR AND LABATT FOR LUNCH
AUGUST 26. PURPOSE OF MEETING WAS TO REGISTER PS CONCERN
THAT AFL-CIO PROGRAM BEING CONSIDERED MIGHT BE CARRIED OUT
IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ENDANGER GAINS ALREADY MADE AND COMPLICATE
FUTURE PROGRESS IN LABOR SECTOR. MINISTER EMPHASIZED ANY
LABOR PROGRAM "SHOULD NOT BE LIKE US LABOR PROGRAM IN
BRAZIL WHICH WOULD LEAD TO DISASTER IN PORTUGAL." THE
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AFL-CIO PROGRAM MUST BE SUPPORTIVE OF THE OVERALL FREE
LABOR EFFORT, AND NOT ATTEMPT TO DOMINATE THE LABOR
SCENE. HE URGED THAT ANY AFL-CIO INITIATIVES BE CAREFULLY
THOUGHT OUT, WELL PLANNED, AND CAREFULLY COORDINATED.

2. WITH REGARD TO POSSIBLE PS COOPERATION IN LABOR
WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS (PSD), THE MINISTER STATED HE

PERSONALLY FAVORED ANY PROGRAM WHICH WOULD STRENGTHEN THE DEMOCRATIC LABOR MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE. ON A PRAGMATIC BASIS HE LEANED TOWARD COMBINING FORCES. QUESTION OF PS COOPERATION WITH PSD, HOWEVER, WAS ISSUE ON WHICH ONLY MARIO SOARES WAS COMPETENT TO SPEAK FOR PARTY.

3. AMBASSADOR SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED IN DETAIL WITH AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF LABOR AND THE NEED TO BE UNOBTUSIVE IN WHATEVER WE DO. BROWN UNDERSTOOD, AND A BASIC AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED THAT ANY LABOR PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE REQUESTED BY THE PORTUGUESE, CARRIED OUT IN AN AGREED MANNER AND SUPPORTIVE OF OVERALL USG POLICY. THE EMBASSY WOULD RETAIN POLICY CONTROL OF ANY USG SUPPORTED LABOR PROGRAM. MINISTER SAID HE WAS REASSURED BY THIS, PARTICULARLY LATTER POINT.

4. COMMENT: MINISTER'S APPROACH WAS TYPICALLY PORTUGUESE -- LOWKEY AND DELAYED UNTIL END OF THE LUNCH. MATEUS, IN AN ASIDE, LEFT NO DOUBT, HOWEVER, THAT THIS WAS MAJOR POINT WHICH MINISTER WISHED TO GET ACROSS. FROM CONTEXT OF HIS REMARKS AND PASSING REFERENCES, IT IS APPARENT THAT THE MINISTER'S CONCERN REGARDING THE LOCAL IMPACT OF AFL-CIO INVOLVEMENT WAS HEIGHTENED BY COMMENTS HE HEARD DURING HIS RECENT TRIP TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA. CARLUCCI
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NOTE: LIMDIS ADDED PER LISBON 6730

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